FOREST SERVICE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

THE FOREST SERVICE

History Line

1876 1971

To: History Coordinators
Forest Service Personnel

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The First Bulldozer driven by motor power was constructed by hand by Earl Hall of the Forest Service in the Bureau of Public Roads shops at Government Island near Oakland, California, in 1929. Although designed primarily for Forest Service road work in rough and rocky country, it soon became a powerful weapon against fire. A manufacturer, from design drawings of this handmade machine, constructed several dozers which were purchased by the Forest Service. And since then this ponderous, clanking, mundane machine has circled the earth many times--although at a somewhat lower level than Colonel Glenn and Shepard--it has been used for every possible earth moving task, including burying the enemy in his foxholes. It will doubtless survive the nuclear age, even though it cannot boast one piece of delicate instrumentation. It comes near being the universal tool.--Them Were The Days by Paul M. Roberts, 1965. This is corroborated by Forest Service Engineering Records.

"Every Member Of The Service realized that it was engaged in a great and necessary undertaking in which the whole future of their country was at stake. The Service had a clear understanding of where it was going, it was determined to get there, and it was never afraid to fight for what was right."--Gifford Pinchot (Breaking New Ground), summing up the Forest Service attitude in 1905.

Did You Know that the Forest Service was a pioneer in changing the filing and record-keeping systems of the whole Federal Government? "The first two decades of the twentieth century brought important changes in the record-keeping methods of our Federal Government...Among these pioneers was the United States Forest Service...According to James R. Garfield, the committee on Department methods, of which he was a member, was unanimous in the opinion that the Service in 1906 was so much more efficient than other offices that its methods were used as the basis for recommendations to other Federal bureaus...Of these innovations the most important probably were the introduction of vertical files, the development of subject classification of correspondence, and the inauguration of a plan for systematic disposal or retention of records...The introduction of vertical filing in the United States accompanied the introduction of scientific forestry. Both were introduced in 1892 and were first given wide publicity at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893.--Harold T. Pinkett in "The American Archivist," October 1959.

The Chief: "These Are Tiny Threads in the rich tapestry that is Forest Service history. There is much, much more! And every individual in the Service could perform his job more effectively if he had a broader knowledge of our story as it stretches back now for nearly a century. The further we move in time away from our origins, the more we need to know our history. Actually, every new employee should get some Service history in his orientation training. The beginning, therefore, of an organized history program is of considerable significance to the future of natural resource development and protection. The value of Forest Service history lies not merely in collecting and keeping records, but in utilizing history to enrich and dramatize the heritage of our present actions.--Edward P. Cliff, Chief.

Our New History Program is underway. It is involved with three kinds of history: that of the Service itself, history related to the lands it manages, and in a more general way, with the history of forestry in America. Our priority goal, however, is the history of the Forest Service, its origin, growth, and contribution to the society in which it has developed.

Our approach will be two-pronged: (1) Begin with the present to maintain better organized history files, thus assure that material of future historical significance will be kept; and (2) Go back to the beginning (1876) and work upward to fill in those gaps in our history that are now inadequately documented. Some of these we are already moving on.

The Forest Service History Office, contrary to rumors, is not engaged in writing a history of the Forest Service. That may be up ahead somewhere, but as of now there are numerous other tasks to be done in laying the groundwork for a better organized, more systematic history program throughout the Service, as was set out in Chief Cliff's memorandum of August 24, 1970. That's what the History Office is all about. Despite the present severely limited budget, various actions are underway.

For example:
*A new history Regulation (1680) will be out soon.
*A cooperative agreement has been signed with the Forest History Society, Santa Cruz, California, whereby the Society will make tape-recorded oral interviews with a number of retired Forest Service people, tracing the origin and development of the multiple use concept in forest management.
*Art Carhart is writing a book on the origin and growth of the Wilderness concept as it came to life and was nurtured on the National Forests. Art was the first landscape architech ever employed by the Forest Service some 54 years ago (1917), and was himself an actor officiating at the birth of Wilderness, along with such men as Aldo Leopold, Carl J. Stahl, Paul Riis, Paul Rainey, and others. So Art's personal narrative on the beginnings of the wilderness idea can be an invaluable historical document. Tenative title: This Way To Wilderness.

*Great Plains Shelter Belt Plantings. Negotiations are underway to have historian Dr. Wilmon H. Droze, head of the Tennessee State Library and Archives, pick up on the incomplete work on this project of Paul Roberts. Roberts, who has undergone surgery and still under treatment, has agreed that Dr. Droze is the one to carry on his own substantial contribution to this landmark project of the depression years.

Forest Service History Line, the first issue of which you are now reading, is not intended as a regular issuance, but will be distributed occasionally as the need arises. Its purpose is to serve as a line of communications between the History Office and the network of field and WO history coordinators, or representatives. All coordinators, therefore, are invited to contribute to it--bits of interesting FS history, news of new or significant projects or accomplishments.

Much Forest Service History, as we all know, has already been written and published, and the process continues. If the numerous books about the Service were all in one collection, or at least in collections we all knew about, we would have a good start toward an important history collection. This is a goal of the History office: To bring together in the WO, the RO's and Station offices a FS Reference Shelf of published books about the Service. Coordinators, please note, and begin your own collection. Other personnel: if you have such books you would contribute to a permanent Reference Shelf, they will be gratefully received and acknowledged, and you will be given name credit as the donor in the front of the book or books. If you know of such books, but do not wish to contribute them, the history office will pay a reasonable price for copies of works we don't already have. To make this scheme most useful, as soon as any collection is started, it will be necessary to publicize the lists and where they are--which the History Line will be glad to do.

Breaking New Ground, the personal story of Gifford Pinchot and his forestry career, is one book we especially need. To our knowledge, Milt Bryan has the only copy in or near the WO. With the use it gets, it won't last forever. For the Forest Service to be without several copies of this book is equivalent to a church without Bibles.

History Coordinators, both field offices and WO, are listed on page 4. Names are listed as an informational and coordinating aid for both the coordinators themselves as well as all personnel. Purpose of the coordinators is to be sure that in most FS offices one known individual will have responsibility for keeping history files and will devote some interest and time to Service history. At this point in our history program, it is understood that most coordinators will have other duties and thus will not be devoting full-time to history. But as the program develops, this could change. For the present, it is a step forward to have history contacts in most offices. In one way or another, we expect to provide coordinators with some training toward improved collection and preservation of Service history. The calibre of those designated as coordinators is encouraging and indicative of the high regard in which all Forest Service people hold their history.

W.O. HISTORY COORDINATORS

PROGRAMS AND LEGISLATION

LR&L - Milton M. Bryan
PP&SP - Clayton P. Libeau

ADMINISTRATION

M&YCP - Ralph G. Didriksen
AS - William F. Hice
PM - Helen M. Weiler
AM - Claude O. Morin
B&F - Glenn C. Todd
I&E - Clifford D. Owsley

RESEARCH

FI&DR - Robert Z. Callaham
FF&ASR - Charles C. Buck
FE&MR - James Micklewright
TMR - Carl E. Ostrom
FP&ER - John T. Drow
FER - Walter S. Hopkins
IF - Clark E. Holscher

NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM

E - Myles R. Howlett
FC - Edwin J. Young
L - Paul A. Swarthout
LC - Billy R. Newkirk
RM - Robert S. Rummell
TM - Robert W. Pearl
WS - H. Richard Bryant
WL - Donald D. Strode
R - Gary W. Plisco

STATE AND PRIVATE FORESTRY

FP&RBP - Harold F. Morey
CFFC - Allen J. Logan
FPC - Donald P. Graham
CFM - George L. Perry

FIELD HISTORY COORDINATORS

REGIONS AND STATIONS

R-1 - Robert Milodragovich
R-2 - Edward F. Littlehales
R-3 - Joseph L. Armijo
R-4 - Hal L. Mickelson
R-5 - Bertha B. Eberhard
Betty Conrad
R-6 - Nella I. Hulet
R-8 - Sylvia J. Davis
R-9 - Mark J. Boesch
R-10 - Charles Yates
NE Area - Philip L. Thornton
SE Area - Ira Bray
FPL - Frederick A. Strenge
SO - Norbert H. Sand
SE - John K. McDonald
Rocky Mt. - Roger W. Leonard
PSW - Theodore B. Yerke
PNW - Charles J. Newlon
NC - Frederic C. Battell
INT - George F. Gruschow
ITF - Lawrence W. Hill